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NASA
Procedural
Requirements

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COMPLIANCE IS MANDATORY

Management of Senior Scientific and Technical (ST) and other Senior Level (SL) Positions

Responsible Office: Office of Human Capital Management

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Preface

P.1 Purpose

This NPR establishes the lines of authority, distribution of responsibilities, and principal statements of policy governing management of Senior Scientific and Professional (ST) and Senior-Level (SL) positions in NASA.

P.2 Applicability

This NPR applies to NASA Headquarters and NASA Centers, including Component Facilities. In consonance with the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended (5 U.S.C. App S 2, and the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 (31 U.S.C. S 901 et seq.), nothing herein shall be construed as limiting the Inspector General's or the Chief Financial Officer's authority regarding ST or SL employees or positions within those organizations.

P.3 Authority

- a. Employment of Specially Qualified Scientific and Professional Personnel, 5 U.S.C. S 3104.
- b. Classification of Position above GS-15, 5 U.S.C. S 5108.
- c. Employment in Senior-Level and Scientific and Professional Positions, 5 C.F.R. S 319.
- d. Pay under Other Systems, 5 C.F.R. S 534.
- e. Performance Management, 5 C.F.R. S 430.
- f. Awards, 5 C.F.R. S 451.

P.4 References

NPD 3000.1, Management of Human Resources.

NPR 3335.1, Internal Placement of NASA Employees.

P.5 Cancellation

NPR 3319.1, dated May 7, 1999.

/S/
Thomas Luedtke
Associate Administrator for

Institutions and Management

Chapter 1. Coverage and Objectives

1.1 Coverage

ST and SL positions provide a senior-level resource to be used by the Administrator in support of NASA's mission. The ST and SL resources system and authority to effect personnel actions emanate from the Administrator.

1.2 Objectives

1.2.1 To attract and retain highly competent senior personnel.

1.2.2 To provide for their systematic development.

1.2.3 To hold them accountable for their performance and to reward high performers and remove poor performers.

1.3 Characteristics of an ST Position

A position classified above GS-15, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. S 3104, to carry out research and development functions in the physical, biological, medical, or engineering sciences, or a closely related field, that requires the services of specially qualified personnel and is not covered by any other pay system.

1.4 Characteristics of an SL Position

A position classified above GS-15, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. S 5108, that is not covered by another pay system (e.g. the SES and ST systems).

Chapter 2. Management Structure

2.1 The Administrator is responsible directly and personally for the overall management of the ST and SL resources at NASA. Where not prohibited by law or regulation, any or all of the individual responsibilities may be delegated to an appropriate management level. Such delegations may be communicated by memoranda and are considered as incorporated into this NPR.

2.2 The Executive Resources Board (ERB) is a board required by law to conduct the SES merit staffing process. The NASA ERB also functions as an advisory board to the Administrator for all executive resources (SES, ST, and SL) planning, utilization of executive resources, and executive development. Members and the chairperson are appointed by the Administrator or designee.

2.3 The Performance Review Board (PRB) is a board required by law to make recommendations to the Administrator on the performance of NASA executives. The NASA PRB also performs this function for ST and SL employees. Members and the chairperson are appointed by the Administrator or designee. The NASA Senior Executive Committee (SEC) serves as the PRB for NASA Center Directors, executives reporting to the Administrator and Deputy Administrator, and members of the PRB. Members are the chairperson of the ERB, the chairperson of the PRB, and one or more other members appointed by the Administrator or designee. At a minimum, more than one-half of the members of each board must be SES career appointees.

2.4 The Deputy Administrator oversees the ST and SL resources system in the Mission Support Offices at Headquarters, chairs the SEC, and shares full authority with the Administrator for overall management of the ST and SL resources system at NASA.

2.5 The Associate Administrator oversees the ST and SL resources system in the Mission Directorates, the Office of Safety and Mission Assurance, the Office of Program Analysis and Evaluation, the Office of the Chief Engineer, the Office of Program and Institutional Integration, and at NASA Centers.

2.6 The Assistant Administrator for Human Capital Management assists the Administrator in the overall management of ST and SL resources, chairs the ERB, serves on the PRB, directs activities that provide policy advice and management support to the Administrator, and oversees and coordinates ST and SL systems dealing with recruitment, appointment, position allocation and management, executive development, performance management, and compensation.

2.7 Executive Position Managers (EPMs) are Officials-in-Charge (OICs) of Headquarters Offices and Center Directors, and they manage the NASA ST and SL resources system within their NASA organizational jurisdictions. The EPMs implement ST and SL management policy and processes in their organizations, including the following: performance management, Presidential Rank Award and bonus nominations, incentive awards, compensation, executive resources and development planning, and identification of potential successor candidates.

2.8 The Director, Workforce Management and Development Division, Office of Human Capital Management, serves as the Executive Secretary and provides direct staff support to the ERB, the PRB, and the SEC.

Chapter 3. Management Authority

3.1 The Administrator assumes and retains all authority not otherwise delegated, including (but not limited to) approval of the following:

3.1.1 New appointments.

3.1.2 All Presidential Distinguished and Meritorious Rank Award nominations and Incentive Awards.

3.1.3 Performance awards (bonuses).

3.1.4 Establishment, modification, or abolishment of ST and SL positions.

3.1.5 Establishment and allocation of ceilings for ST and SL positions.

3.1.6 Pay increases to a rate exceeding the range authorized pursuant to the annual performance review process.

3.1.7 Administrative decreases in pay.

3.1.8 Adverse actions.

3.1.9 Reassignments.

3.1.10 Recruitment, relocation, or retention incentives.

3.1.11 Details, Intergovernmental Personnel Act assignments, or developmental assignments exceeding 120 days.

3.1.12 Recommendations to OPM for waivers of reduction in pay for civil service annuitants.

3.1.13 Critical position pay.

3.2 Authorities delegated by the Administrator may be redelegated if expressly permitted, but not below the EPM.

3.3 Actions involving programs or functions with direct oversight by a Headquarters executive must be coordinated with that executive before they are submitted for higher-level approval.

Chapter 4. Policy

4.1 Recruitment and Selection

4.1.1 Initial appointments to an ST position may be made with or without formal competition. An evaluation of a candidate's qualifications, accomplishments, and credentials based on the criteria in the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Research Grade Evaluation Guide or Equipment Development Grade Evaluation Guide will be performed before submission of a candidate by the EPM for approval. The chairperson of the ERB will conduct an Agency-level review to ensure that positions identified as ST are appropriately established as ST and necessary to support mission operations and that the individuals who fill them meet the appropriate standard.

4.1.2 Initial appointments to an SL position require competition under merit promotion or delegated examining procedures. Procedures and guidelines in NPR 3335.1, Internal Placement of NASA Employees, will be applied for internal staffing of SL positions. Positions also may be filled through accretion of duties. The chairperson of the ERB will conduct an Agency-level review to ensure that the position is appropriately established as an SL position, is necessary to support mission operations, and that the individual appointed to that position meets the appropriate standard for the SL position.

4.1.3 Because ST and SL positions often are based on the qualifications of the incumbents and may represent a specialized need that may or may not continue, it generally is appropriate to fill these positions on a time-limited basis to afford flexibility in staffing. The chairperson of the ERB may conduct a periodic review of any or all ST and SL positions to ensure that they are necessary to support the Agency's mission or programs and that the incumbents continue to perform at an appropriate level and maintain an appropriate level of expertise and contributions.

4.2 Performance Management

NASA's Performance Management Plan for ST and SL employees is designed to enhance the achievement of Agency goals by encouraging excellence in individual and organizational performance. It also facilitates a systematic eligibility for performance awards and retention decisions. The PRB reviews documentation relating to initial ratings, any recommended alterations, and comments prior to recommending final performance ratings and cash awards. The Administrator considers the recommendations of the PRB and SEC in determining final performance ratings and cash awards.

4.3 ST and SL Pay

4.3.1 General. The level of pay of an employee should be a reflection of the responsibilities of the position and the qualifications, performance, and contributions of the employee. Agencies are expected to utilize the full ST/SL salary range.

4.3.2 Initial Pay Setting. Initial appointments will be made at the lowest practicable pay level. Current General Schedule (GS) employees promoted to an ST/SL position may receive an appropriate increase in pay, normally six percent of the adjusted base pay. Appropriate alignment with the pay of SES positions also will be considered, where appropriate and practicable. Proposed salaries exceeding six percent must be justified based on appropriate factors, such as the scope and impact of the position, the special or unique qualifications of the selectee, or competing salary offers. The salary of a selectee from the private sector will be set at the lowest practicable level, taking into account the responsibilities of the position to be filled, the experience and qualifications of the selectee and anticipated contributions, the relative difficulty in filling the position with a highly qualified individual, and current salary.

4.3.3 Pay Adjustments. ST and SL pay may be adjusted up or down no more than once in a 12-month period.

4.3.3.1 STs and SLs receive locality pay and are entitled to locality pay increases under

5 U.S.C. S 5304. In addition, they may receive increases to base pay based on demonstrated performance, focusing on measurable results that contributed to mission or program success. A decrease based on poor performance will be processed under

5 C.F.R. S 430 and requires a 30-day written notice. A decrease based on conduct will be processed under 5 C.F.R. S 752 and requires a 30-day written notice. Annual adjustments to locality pay resulting from a Presidential

Executive order are processed as exceptions to the 12-month limit. Increases to base pay that do not exceed the greater of the annual GS adjustment under 5 U.S.C. S 5303 or the Executive Schedule adjustment under

5 U.S.C. S 5318, effective the same date, also are processed as exceptions to the 12-month limit. Laws and regulations do not allow any other exceptions or waivers to the 12-month limit.

4.3.3.2 As part of the annual performance management process, the Administrator or designee may authorize performance-based pay increases to base pay for ST and SL employees, which will be effective the first pay period following an adjustment under

5 U.S.C. S 5303 in the rates of pay under the GS, usually the first pay period in January. Unless otherwise authorized by the Administrator or designee, the following range of performance-based increases is authorized (rounded to the nearest dollar), based on a final performance rating approved by the Administrator:

Rating	Maximum Performance-Based Increase (added to base pay)
Outstanding	4%
Highly Successful	2%
Fully Successful	1%
Below Fully Successful	0%

4.3.3.3 There is no entitlement or requirement to give performance-based increases. Increases less than the maximum rate authorized are appropriate if a larger increase would be inconsistent with the salary structure established at a Center or Headquarters office for different organizational levels. Increases greater than these amounts must be approved by the Administrator or designee, based on an appropriate justification by the EPM regarding the level of performance and/or contribution of the employee. Salaries above Executive Level (EX) III are not permitted for ST and SL employees; base pay may not exceed EX-IV.

4.3.3.4 Employees who meet all of the following criteria may receive a

performance-based increase effective the first pay period in January:

1. Have completed one year as an ST or SL.
2. Have completed at least 120 days under an approved ST/SL performance plan.
3. Have received an official rating of record of at least Fully Successful approved by the Administrator.
4. Have not received an increase in the last 12 months.

4.3.3.5 Employees who have less than one year as an ST or SL:

1. And who received an appointment as an ST or SL before June 3 of the previous calendar year and receive an official rating of record of at least Fully Successful approved by the Administrator may receive a performance-based increase of one percent of base pay, provided this amount does not exceed the greater of the amount of the annual GS adjustment under 5 U.S.C. S 5303 or the Executive Schedule adjustment under 5 U.S.C. S 5318 effective the same date.
2. Or who received an appointment as an ST or SL on or after June 3 are not eligible for a performance-based increase.

4.3.3.6 Employees who received a pay increase within the last 12 months:

1. And who received an increase before June 3 and receive an official rating of record of at least Fully Successful approved by the Administrator may receive a performance-based increase of one percent of base pay, provided this amount does not exceed the greater of the amount of the annual GS adjustment under 5 U.S.C. S 5303 or the Executive Schedule adjustment under 5 U.S.C. S 5318 effective the same date. These increases are processed as exceptions to the 12-month limit.
2. Or who received an increase on or after June 3 are not eligible for a performance-based increase.

4.3.3.7 An employee reassigned to a more responsible position may be considered for an increase in pay, subject to the limitations in 5 C.F.R. S 534.503. The executive's most recent performance rating, current pay, and earlier pay adjustments will be factored into the decision. There is no authority to waive the 12-month restriction on pay adjustments for reassignments to more responsible positions.

4.3.3.8 Unless otherwise authorized by the Administrator or designee, the pay of

an employee returning to a GS position from a time-limited promotion to an ST or SL position will be set at the rate that would have been in effect had the employee remained in the GS position, including any within-grade increases to which the employee would have been entitled.

4.4 Presidential Rank Awards, Bonuses, and Incentive Awards (cash and time-off from duty)

ST and SL employees will be considered for all awards and bonuses for which they are eligible under Federal law and OPM guidelines, and consideration will be based on performance rather than position. The Administrator is the final approval authority for Presidential Rank Awards, bonuses, and cash incentive awards, unless otherwise delegated (incentive awards only).

4.5 Employee Development

NASA will provide an effective program framework and the required resources for the systematic development and continuous professional growth of its ST and SL employees. NASA and each employee share the responsibility for identifying individual development needs and obtaining the training, education, and development experiences to meet them. Pursuant to its responsibility, NASA provides in-house education, financial, and logistics support for academic education programs and arrangements for developmental work assignments.

4.6 Ethical Standards

ST and SL employees will maintain the highest level of ethics. Each is entrusted with major responsibilities in support of programs established by our national leadership. They must receive annual ethics briefings, supplemented with any additional required training, as appropriate, and must complete a public financial disclosure report annually as well as when entering and leaving their ST or SL position.